

THE WORKSHOP ON THE PERIPHERY OF EUROPE

(IDS, 24 - 26 November 1977)

This workshop was organised by the Institute of Development Studies,* in co-operation with the Centre for Contemporary European Studies at the University of Sussex. Financial help was provided by the Nuffield Foundation and the European Economic Commission.

The object was to consider how the problems of the periphery of Europe can best be approached, with particular attention to the possible relevance of development studies.

Those invited could be grouped in three different categories:

1. Those whose previous experience was in the field of development and were interested in the applicability in Europe of the theories and practical lessons of this field;
2. National experts working on the national or regional problems of European countries who were known to be interested in possibilities of relating these problems to those of the 'Third World'.
3. Those working in international fields such as migration, tourism and the transnational corporations.

As the news got round about the workshop, many people wrote asking if they could attend it, but the steering committee decided that the attendance should be strictly limited to 30 to enable a proper discussion to take place.

* An earlier project at IDS in this field was "North Sea Oil: The Application of Development Theories" (IDS Communication 121, 1977). See also IDS Bulletin Vol 9 No 2, 1977: "Britain: A Case for Development?".

A very broad range of topics was covered - the possibility of analysing European problems in terms of 'core' and 'periphery'; whether analysis should be in terms of countries, of geographical areas running across national boundaries, or in other ways; such linkages as migration and tourism; the role of the transnational corporations; regional problems of the Scottish Highlands and the Italian South; the structural problems of Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Greece; the future of Europe with special attention to the 'enlargement' of the European Economic Community. (The policy issues that have to be settled in relation to the enlargement arise out of the structural problem of the candidates for EEC membership.)

The justification for including so many topics was that this was the first meeting of its kind and we needed to make a broad survey of the whole field. This did mean, however, that the discussion on some issues had to be cut off before it had fully developed, so perhaps it was a mistake to try to cover so much.* Reports of rapporteurs are attached.

The discussions revealed considerable gaps in available knowledge, and one of the duties of the rapporteurs was to keep a note of the research needs mentioned (also attached).

* The pressure on time was somewhat eased by the adoption of a rule which conference experience suggests as necessary: sessions should not be opened by authors of papers, but by discussants selected well in advance and given a fixed time to introduce the points that need discussion in the subject area concerned, drawing on the session's paper (or papers) to the extent they feel necessary.

It was decided to maintain contact and organise further meetings. The European Association of Development Institutes provides a framework for working groups of this kind, and a meeting of the group is planned to take place during the EADI Assembly in Milan next September. Seminars on various aspects of European development during 1978 are also envisaged.

The papers of the conference have been revised in the light of the discussion and will be published before the September meeting by Harvester Press under the title "Underdeveloped Europe: Studies in Core-Periphery Relations", edited by Dudley Seers, Bernard Schaffer and Marja-Liisa Kiljunen.

DS/MR

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